

City Council Hears Old School Interests

Wave 10 May 1984

MIDWAY—After the public meeting was held, there was still a feeling among many that the problem had been addressed, but not resolved.

Midway's Old School house received considerable damage, and the people of Midway are now torn as to the destiny of the school. Many of the proponents would like to tear the school down, but the opposition says, keep the school building, using new techniques to restore and "rehabilitate" it into a working condition again.

Stephanie Churchhill of the Utah Heritage Society, brought before the city councilmen a letter of intent by a construction company in Salt Lake, which specializes in the restoring of old

buildings. The letter said that the City Council should if at all possible, consider saving the schoolhouse, and asked that the firm be given a chance to study the alternatives other than destruction.

It was also brought out by Ms. Churchhill that there exist numerous grants, loans, and alternatives to help finance such a restoration process.

In a letter read by Ms. Churchhill, from a Alan Roberts, he suggested "It might be in the city's interest to discuss a 90 day moratorium, for further study."

Mayor Eugene Probst then stood and asked Wasatch County and Midway City Building Inspector Clyde Broadbent, to stand and give a small valuation of what it

would take to bring the building up to present standards.

Broadbent listed over 16 things which he felt would have to be done to get the building back to standards.

"I'm not a contractor but I guess it would cost between 150,000 and up," Broadbent said. He then said that he felt there would be nothing on the inside which would be salvageable.

Mayor Probst then stood and said that there had been two contractors, asked by the Mayor, to give an estimate of what the repairs alone would be.

The two contractors guessed \$52,000 for the roof, and \$50,515 for all electrical heating.

"We're over \$120,000 already with nothing on the inside. No

insulation. You'd be looking at \$1,100 a month heating bill."

Mayor Probst said that he felt there would be no possible way to get a grant. The city had tried for several years to get a grant, and none have been made available. The only way to pay for further upkeep, and renovations would be to issue a general obligation bond on the people of Midway.

"The building as it now stands is unsafe," said Bob Mathis, as a concerned citizen. "The city council needs to make a decision."

"I'm concerned about the youth," said Ray Gertsch. "Make this a true historical place so that it can be used for years and years, so it won't deteriorate."

Karl North stood and said, "As a taxpayer, I'd like to see it taken down."

Mayor Probst stood and explained to the citizens gathered, that an alternative to renovation would be the construction of a new building. He stated that Heber Light and Power crews have already donated some time to help such a project along. That the monies from the insurance could also help.

Dr. William Ferguson, questioned exactly how much money would be returned by the Insurance on the building. The Mayor stated that he had not received a definite amount.

Dr. Kitty Ferguson said "I don't think enough time has been spent on this (the building)."

Midway City Councilmen were asked for their opinions. Billie Mair said "I think if this building is brought back up, and only used half the time, it will deteriorate, and we'd be right back where we are now."

When it was asked that a straw poll be taken, there were numerous objections against such an idea. Grant Shelton said, "If we make it a vote, we should let the people decide in an election."

City Councilmen Alan Giles wondered if the people would like to spend the 20 thousand in a study of the building or would they like to use the money elsewhere. He was undecided as to what to do.

The City Council would decide after the facts had been studied which were presented at the meeting. But as it was before the meeting, the City Council had no real cut and dried answer for the people.

Boosters Seek Input on School's destiny

Wave 21 June 1984

MIDWAY—The Midway Boosters Club has taken on the responsibility of determining the feasibility and concern over the restoration of the Old Midway School building.

A flyer, being prepared by the Midway Boosters, will be sent to all the area residents, asking 5 pertinent questions about the school, and the feelings of the community.

The boosters preliminary investigation learned that similar projects cost from \$30 to \$40 a square foot to restore the exterior and rehabilitate the interior into modern, energy efficient space. Similar projects have been attempted in nearby communities, providing much needed civic buildings for new uses. The Midway School has a total floor space of 10,000 square feet with 4,000 square feet in the original front section and 6,000 in the 1910 addition on the rear.

The Boosters feel that the monies offered by the insurance company was way low, as do city officials, and are hoping that the insurance company will give a higher settlement. The insurance company has already offered a \$99,000 settlement.

There is also speculation that a federal jobs bill, will provide monies for the restoration. Provo and Park City are presently using such money to restore projects in those areas.

According to the Boosters, the project would be favorably considered and could be allotted as much as \$50,000 to \$70,000. It is expected that these two sources, the insurance settlement and the jobs bill, could provide enough funding to pay for the entire project.

The Boosters already have several possible uses for the building should the restoration be initiated. They include shops, recital halls, local art and craft shops, professional gallery and possibly a BYU Extension are examples.

Also there is a need for office space in the Midway Town Hall, and the restored building could provide such an area.

Architectural drawings and engineering studies must be done before grants can be obtained, tenants found, firm bids offered or any final decision made. This will cost about \$6000. Preservation Services funds will match up to five thousand dollars from the community for this purpose. The Boosters have already voted to donate \$1,500 toward this preliminary work and to raise additional money through contributions.

The flyer which will be sent around, will ask for community concern, and interest. If there is the interest, then it will take some time to prepare for the grants, etc. to make the restoration possible.

School Demolition to Take Place Soon

Wave 12 July 1984

On Thursday night, July 5th, the Midway City Council met. Councilmen Reed Bezzant, Dennis Clegg, Billie Mair, Grant Shelton, and Mayor Eugene Probst were present. Thursday morning the Boosters had been asked to make a presentation on the progress of their inquiry and survey.

Bill Ferguson presented the information from the Booster's Club. The first item discussed was the possibility of Federal grant money. The Grants in Aid Program has been funded yearly since the 1960's, until 1982 when no funding was appropriated. In 1983 money was provided through a Federal jobs bill. In 1984 no money was appropriated, however there is a good possibility that there will be another appropriation

in 1985. The difficulty here is that the money would not be available until the fall of '85 or summer of '86. Something would have to be done with the old school before then. The use of the insurance money to stabilize the building until grant money is available was discussed. The council felt that this was too risky.

The Booster's survey was discussed next. 3192 surveys were sent to most addresses on record at Heber Light and Power. Approximately 575 of these were sent to Midway addresses. The surveys returned to the store boxes were collected and tabulated. Those returned to the post office box had not yet been tabulated. A total of 68 surveys were returned to the store boxes.

33 of these were from Midway addresses (a 6% response from Midway.) The councilmen felt that only those from Midway were relevant, so only these 33 responses were considered. Of the 33 Midway responses: 11 said to destroy the building, 13 wanted to save the building if the only cost to the city was the insurance money, and 3 didn't know but wanted to take more time to study the situation. Twenty of these respondents answered the question concerning use of the building: two wanted only community use, seven wanted both commercial and community use, and 11 had no objection to any compatible use including commercial only. Six

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School Demolition

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respondents from Midway pledged a total of \$175 and 10 non-Midway respondents pledged a total of \$190. Many people in favor volunteered time and labor, including professional engineering services.

Because the response to the survey was poor, the councilmen concluded that it was totally invalid and could not be used to influence their decisions.

It was decided that absolutely no commercial use of the building would be allowed. Since Federal grant money would not be available until 1985 or 1986, if at all, it was decided to destroy the building as soon as the disputes with the insurance company are settled, probably in two to four weeks. \$99,000 has already been received by Midway, but several more claims are pending.

School Memories Weren't Enough

12 July 1984

The decision to destroy the historical old Midway School Building has been upheld. The memories and unforgettable events which occurred there will be all that remain for the many who attended the school.

It was final after the city council gave the Boosters Club a chance to come up with a viable solution to restore and preserve the building. We feel the Boosters did an excellent job, in proving that there is concern among the residents of Midway and the Valley. Their efforts are to be commended. Their dedication and interest in the community in which they function, proves them invaluable.

The decision of the Midway City Council was not easy. They had to weigh the desires of groups such as the Boosters and other interested parties, against what they felt were the best interests of the community. Its ruling to raze the school and build a new structure should be accepted as in the long range best interests of the community.

It would be most unfortunate for the citizens of Midway, to end up with a dilapidated eyesore of the magnitude of the Heber Tabernacle. This was a similar project that was started by well meaning individuals devoted to the preservation of our heritage. Unfortunately there was no follow up plan for the continued use and maintenance of the preserved relic.

We commend the actions of both city council and the Boosters. We do, however, feel that Midway has been spared future grief by the action of the City Council.